



TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY
HEALTH SCIENCES CENTER

News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 19, 2021

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COVID-19 Changed the Journey—Not the Success of Future Physicians *TTUHSC Medical Students Learned Their Match*

The COVID-19 pandemic forced changes to medical schools across the country with the 2021 residency recruitment, interview and Match Day processes. Fourth-year students went virtual for their residency interviews, adjusted clinical rotations and lived through the academic adjustments due to the pandemic. Yet, even with the trials of the year, Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center (TTUHSC) School of Medicine fourth-year students met the challenges and participated virtually in Match Day March 19.

Match Day is a nerve-wracking event that has played out on medical school campuses across the country since 1952. Approximately 180 TTUHSC School of Medicine students participated in Match Day and learned where they will be for the next three to seven years for their residencies. The results were sealed in an envelope and opened simultaneously at all of the nation's medical schools.

TTUHSC Executive Vice President and Dean of the School of Medicine, Steven L. Berk, M.D., said COVID-19 did not deter students wanting to go into the medical field, but instead influenced a new generation of excellence in medicine.

“Few people have been spared the tragedies associated with this disease,” Berk said. “For many, the pandemic has logically created a sense of despair and helplessness, of seeing events as being beyond one’s control. To others, COVID-19 has been a call to arms to the medical workforce. The public health crisis has been a battle cry for many passionate students that want to rise to a generational challenge.”

Months before Match Day, students begin applying to residency programs in their preferred specialties. Students visit sites to evaluate and ultimately rank their preferred residency programs. At the same time, administrators at each site interview applicants and rank them. The National Resident Matching Program (NRMP) coordinates this process and makes the final match algorithm, which is designed to produce results for students to fill the thousands of training positions available at U.S. teaching hospitals.

Berk said although Match Day is celebrated for one day, the event is actually a weeklong process. The process of Match Day is celebrated at the 155 U.S. medical schools accredited by the Liaison Committee on Medical Education. Starting on the Monday of

Match Week, applicants are informed whether they have been matched to a residency program of their choice, but the student is not told the name of that program.

“These students were resilient, stepped up and answered the call to be on the health care frontlines and now will go on to begin their residencies,” Berk said. “We are proud of our students’ accomplishments and share their excitement as they pursue their careers at outstanding teaching programs around the country.”

This year TTUHSC School of Medicine students matched to the following residency programs: TTUHSC (20), University of Texas Southwestern (8), Baylor College of Medicine (8), Baylor Scott and White (7), Mayo Clinic, George Washington University School of Medicine, Johns Hopkins Hospital, Cleveland Clinic, Stanford University School of Medicine, Brigham and Women’s Hospital, Massachusetts General Hospital, Mount Sinai Hospital, Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania, University of Alabama Medical Center and the University of California Medical Center.